

# THE LEISURE HOUR

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## THE MADRAS HAWKER.

THE Madras hawker is, among the European community of that distant presidency, precisely what a London bonnet-shop is among the denizens of this vast metropolis—a never-failing source of attraction

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and amusement to the ladies, and a sort of nightmare to thrifty husbands. Both, however, in some cases, are tolerated as a necessary nuisance, and the Madras hawker may boast of a decided advantage over the bonnet-shops, inasmuch, as while

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the latter are stationary and only admit of a casual glance or occasion a temporary tantalization, he, like a valorous and experienced general, is always attacking the weak points of those he besieges in their own citadels. He takes his men, together with his arms and ammunition, about with him, always shifting ground and continually tracking his fair prey to their domestic retreats. Then, again, he has in his staff of active and indefatigable spies—dubashes, chokeras, amahs, and toneycatchers, all servants in the employment of the English in India, and each one of whom receives *custom*, or a per-centage, from the hawker for every rupee's worth of goods that he sells in the house. These servants have a guard always posted at the gates of the compound, who conveys to the passing hawker the intelligence of the exact state of the citadel within. If the master of the house happen to be a civilian or a merchant, he is sure to be at the court-house, or the kutcherry, or his office, from ten A. M. till four P. M.; the field is therefore open to the charge, and no sooner has tiffin-hour passed than in pops the hawker, with his two and sometimes three coolie loads of goods, and the lady of the house is reminded by the intonations of his cry that she is dreadfully in want of a new mosquito-gauze, or a dress for the child, or some other unknown necessary of which she would never have even dreamt had not the hawker talked her into a belief of wants hitherto unfelt.

Military men are the hawker's aversion; for, if bachelors, they are so reckless of his carefully-folded goods, and toss them about so much, besides insisting on his emptying out every box to the very last article, that the hawker loses half a day, after beating a retreat from their quarters, in re-arranging and re-folding everything—for the neatness and compact method of packing usually adopted by these men is their greatest boast; should they be married men, matters are still worse, for the subaltern has enough to do to make both ends of his small salary meet, without squandering the money upon what he emphatically terms trash; besides all this, they seldom quit their houses during the hotter hours of the day, and the native orderly always has instructions to drive away hawkers from the gate. Notwithstanding these precautions, however, the patience and perseverance of the hawker sometimes meet with success. There are occasional public dinners at the military mess, from which ladies are excluded, and on these occasions the hawker tribe is on the *qui vive*. Visiting hours are over at Madras by two P. M., and the mess dinners are usually at three. At this juncture, the lady of the house, worn out with the excessive heat of the afternoon, will generally be found reclining listlessly upon a sofa, fanning herself: the weather being too oppressive even to read, the last book from the circulating library has perhaps dropped upon the floor, and there lies unheeded and unread. A victim to *ennui*, she is just dozing off, and the native ayah has been summoned to fan her mistress with a *cuscus* fan, when, lo! this listless state of apathy is agreeably broken in upon by the cry of, "Hawker, marm! very good things to-day, marm!" The ayah is immediately despatched into the verandah to summon the hawker into her mistress's presence. In comes the hawker, all smiles and salaams, redolent with sandal-wood and

other perfumes, and his moustache shining with the best Rowlands' macassar (which he has purloined from his stock-in-trade, making good the deficit with common cocoa-nut oil); his nose is surmounted with three gaily-coloured streaks, one green, one yellow, one red, and in addition to these he has sometimes a brilliant wafer stuck between his eyebrows: these are symbols of his high caste, for the hawker always is, or always pretends to be, a lineal descendant from the highest Brahmin families. As regards his costume, our hawker is the *beau ideal* of Indian dandyism; his under-coats are finest silk, his nether garments cambric, whilst his long surtout, which fits tightly to the body and arms, is made of the finest flowered book muslin. The coolies that carry his boxes are not quite so elegantly clad; but these plebeians are only permitted to deposit their loads on the fine rattan matting, when they are expelled from the house, as much to their own satisfaction as to that of anybody else, for they immediately indulge in a much-loved siesta, and, stretched beneath the shade of some mango trees, snore away the hour occupied by their employer in profitable bargains.

Meanwhile the hawker, having seated himself, undoes the cording of one of his three boxes, which he then opens. Click goes the lock with a loud spring, and up flies the cover, exposing to the anxious gaze of the lady-patroness the hidden treasures within. The hawker seats himself tailor-fashion, and extracting a rupee from his money-bags, hits it against the lock until its clear silver tones ring again. This he does, as he will tell you, for *custom's* sake. Now servants who have interests at stake in this identical custom linger about the ante-chambers, peep through doors and windows, and listen, so that not a fraction be lost; occasionally too they compare notes, and not unfrequently disagree in their reckonings.

"Now, hawker," asks the lady, "what have you got to sell to-day?"

The hawker, who has a very good colloquial knowledge of English, invariably replies; "Very fine things, marm," and then, carefully unpacking the first trunk, these "very fine things" are one by one exposed to view.

"Fine book-muslin, marm; two rupees a yard." Of course two rupees is about ten times the value of the article displayed; but then, like all orientals, the hawker must be beat down, and as he has occasionally caught the unwary at his first offer, he thinks he loses nothing by making exorbitant demands.

The book-muslin is passed over as not required, and then comes jaconet, dimities, cambric, polampours, silks, satins, palmarinoes—in short, a little of all things, including scents, soaps, hair oils, and even curry-combs and brushes for horses. Whenever anything is purchased, and the terms cannot be agreed upon, then the hawker conciliates the lady of the house by telling her that it shall be sold for whatever "missus pleases," and then the ayah is referred to as a kind of umpire, who usually, of course, decides in favour of the hawker, from the simple fact that the more money he gets the greater her share of the *custom* is likely to be.

The first box has now been emptied, and the hawker has only sold to the amount of about thirty rupees. He shakes his head and murmurs audibly,

as he replaces the things, that it is very bad gain for him to-day, forgetful perhaps that fifteen out of the thirty rupees have been net profit to him. The second box is next opened, and the baby screams with delight, for the hawker craftily displays the worst commodities first, shrewdly calculating that, if he can sell any of these, he is pretty sure of disposing of the others. What an assortment of toys does the hawker reveal! Dolls with eyes that open and shut, whole regiments of mounted cavalry carefully boxed up, full-grown trees and houses, shepherds and sheep, lions, tigers, and all four-footed animals living on peaceable terms together, all within the precincts of large empty wafer-boxes; and, best of all, a ready-cooked dinner for baby, comprising fictitious joints and turkeys. The small darling turns crimson with delight as the fond mamma pays the hawker for three or four of the largest boxes, and then the child and its treasures are handed over to the care of the amah (nurse) in the bed-room, and the mother has at least purchased a few minutes' tranquillity. Under the toys there are laces; under the laces, ribbons; under the ribbons, note-paper and ivory fans; and then a miscellaneous collection of goods, such as *The Keepsake* for 1831, the *Souvenir* for 1822, a view of London previous to the great fire, and a book or two of the fashions in 1779.

Upon the whole, the hawker makes unexceptionable bargains, so he displays more alacrity in undoing the third box, and it is now mamma's turn to play the child. "Oh, what a love of a dress!" exclaims the lady, as some costly ball-dress catches her eye. The hawker perceives the admiration and turns it to account; and we are much mistaken in the man if he does not earn cent. per cent. by the bargain. Then come artificial flowers, Trichinopoly gold chains, and other jewellery; so that if the lady of the house be a Barra Bebee Sahib, or the wife of a wealthy civilian, he has sold to the amount of a thousand rupees before closing and strapping the last box; and if only a subaltern's lady, why a month's pay may be set aside for that evening's *divertissement*.

His business thus transacted to his satisfaction, the coolies are again burdened, and the boxes are heavier, for the cash far outweighs the goods disposed of. The hawker makes his salaams and withdraws, and two minutes after a frightful wrangling is heard in the compound; the twenty servants, like so many vultures, have pounced upon their prey; the sturdy coolies are waylaid. One would think from the noise that there was murder being committed; but this is only *paish* (Tamil for talk). No Frenchman could compete with them for gestures. Suddenly there is a lull, for the parties have agreed to treat under a banian tree; the boxes are placed upon the ground, and the disputants squat round them. After five minutes' mild argument, in which the hawker vainly endeavours to persuade his listeners into a belief that he has been rather a loser than otherwise by the bargain, he offers them one-tenth of what the servants, according to established usage, have a right to expect. This offer is received with violent acclamations, and a perfect roaring ensues, until eventually the hawker is compelled to comply with the usage, whereupon he is suffered to depart, and the servants get up a small scene amongst

themselves about the proportioning of the said profits.

The Madras hawker is a great frequenter of public auctions; and in the hottest weather, as well as during the height of the monsoons, he rarely misses one of them. Here, for want of competition, he buys in his stock for an almost nominal value; and if he cannot dispose of the goods in the presidency itself, he journeys into the interior and benefits his health and purse by a visit to Bangalore or the distant Neilgherry hills, every ten miles adding an additional *anna* (the sixteenth part of a rupee) to the already exorbitant prices. Though the goods thus vended are generally of an inferior quality, and extremely dear, such is the indolence produced by lassitude and heat, that there are few who do not prefer making this sacrifice to getting into their carriages or palanquins, in order to be conveyed to Griffliths', or to Ashton, Richardson, and Co.'s, the two great emporiums of Madras—shops which may be said to bear to that presidency the relative position that Swan and Edgar's, in Regent-street, bears to minor London shops. Besides the regular Madras hawker, there are a few native pedlars that deal almost exclusively in books. These are also amassed at auctions, and as the men are ignorant of the language of the literature they patronize, their stock-in-trade, as may be readily conceived, generally consists of the most heterogeneous collection of odd volumes that can well be brought together. With them, fine bindings and gilt edges are everything. We well remember having purchased a complete set of Gibbon's "*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*" for a rupee and a half, whereas an old "*Forget-me-not*" for 1836 was valued at fifteen rupees. Bombay also sends forth its annual hawkers, and these again essentially differ from the others, inasmuch as they restrict themselves to edibles, such as dried figs, dates, walnuts, etc., all of which are originally brought from the Red Sea, and which necessarily must be considered luxuries at Madras, when they will fetch such a price as repays the hawker for the expenses and fatigues of so long a journey.

#### THE STREAM AND ITS FLOWERS.

I HAVE often thought, as I watched the silver river gliding among the emerald grass, how fitted those flowing waters were to awaken within us poetic feelings. Onward they go, their bright line meandering through the landscape with so low a tune that we must pause to listen if we would catch its melody; save when some heap of pebbles has gathered there, over which the waters leap playfully, as if their tones were the glad music of a mirthful spirit. On and on they glide, the green things growing greener where they pass, the roots of the trees gaining nutriment, and the flowers receiving a scattering of pearls on their leaves; the cottage homes which lie about them gaining refreshment by their waters; and their low murmurs waking solemn dirge-like tones to the ear of the sorrowing mourner, who has come to the quiet village churchyard to look again on the spot which holds the frail body of the beloved. So well is the river fitted for an emblem of calmness, that we feel the appropriateness of that promise of

Scripture to him whose mind is stayed on God, that his "peace shall flow like a river."

All botanists like well the stream-side, for they know that there they shall find the greatest wealth of wild flowers; that there are gathered the tallest grasses and the largest blossoms. In tropical lands, the presence of a stream makes an oasis in the desert; and the traveller, after wandering, for miles amid desolate regions, hails with joy the refreshing stream with its verdure and blossoms. Nothing, for example, can equal the dreariness and death-like stillness of some regions in Southern Peru. Sometimes, for twenty or thirty miles, neither bird, insect, nor plant is to be seen; but if the smallest spring arises amidst the dusty soil, a green world is created, over which the wing of the bird is soon seen hovering, and insects of brightest beams hum their welcome to the sunbeam.

If we wander by one of our streams on a summer's day, we see how gracefully that tall reed (*Arundo phragmites*) nods down its brown plume to the slightest passing wind; and how its multitudes of delicate stems form a covert to the little reedlings and sedge-birds which sing there. A rougher wind comes on and sways down the plume, and down, too, nearly to the surface of the water, goes the nest which the sedge-warbler has so skillfully wound about its stem. But neither plant nor youngling bird will be harmed, and the parent birds will sing out their joyous chorus to the morrow's dawn, or to the traveller of to-night, whose steps may be guided by moonlight along the river-side. And that tall reed, furnishing a shelter to the birds, has its uses too for man, and is gathered that cottage-roofs may be covered, and embankments formed for sea-dikes, with its long hollow stems. Those dark panicles, which, when fully blown, look like a mass of steel-coloured down, furnish a good green dye; indeed, in some countries, the reeds are carefully harvested, and even exported into neighbouring places for their manifold uses. The rustic name of windle-stream is expressive of its bowing to the wind, and the plant is the *roseau de marais* of the French.

We may not here dwell largely on the tall and handsome aquatic grasses, or linger over that beautiful species, the whorl-grass (*Aira aquatica*), whose bluish green foliage gives a grace to the stream, and whose young shoots provide such ample food to the birds; nor stay to praise fully that beautiful canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), which ornaments them so well with its variegated leaves and tall panicle of flowers, and which the Welsh peasant gathers so often to place on the tomb of his friends; while we must leave unnoticed also many other beautiful native grasses of our waters. Neither must we linger over those wondrous plants, the *confervæ*, which like green threads cover the stones at the bottom of the pool, and in stagnant waters abound so much that they hide all other vegetation. Green as they are when down in the depths, they become of brown hue when they ascend to the surface of the water and are more exposed to light; and they increase so rapidly, that the attempt to clear them away often seems almost useless. Floating masses of these lie in our pools and streams for miles away, masses several inches deep, making green meadows in the water. Some of these are called in country places

by the name of crowsilks, and are used, when dried, for stuffing beds, for making wadding for garments, and some of them even for manufacturing paper. One of them, the globe-crowsilk, or moorballs, has its filaments gathered into a globular tuft, an inch or two in diameter; and in olden times, this and other *confervæ* were in wondrous repute as a healing remedy for a fractured limb. Some of the filaments which compose the green of our ponds have such strange twistings and movements, that, to see them under a microscope, one wonders not that some naturalists declare them to belong to the animal, and not to the vegetable world. Then we may see these filaments travelling on in a few hours to the distance of ten times their own length, from the spot on which they were placed.

Pond-weeds, with long stems and dark-green clear leaves, grow in great numbers on our waters, and have received from the botanist the scientific name of river-guests; and duck-weeds with thick juicy small leaves are abundant there, lessening the injurious exhalations of stagnant pools, by converting the hydrogen gas into one fitted for our respiration; but we must pass them by to examine the gayer ornaments of the waters. Most beautiful of our aquatic plants, perhaps the most beautiful of all our native wild flowers, and reminding us of tropical blossoms, is our water-lily (*Nymphaea alba*). It is not plentiful in every stream, and seems in general to prefer the more sequestered ones, though we know of no spot where it is so common or in such perfection as in the neighbourhood of Oxford, where the surface of almost every pond and slow river seems strewn with it. So full are its petals, that it appears almost a double flower; while their whiteness is such that it might seem sculptured of marble. This nymph or naiad of the streams opens at about seven in the morning and closes in the afternoon, lying upon or just below the surface of the river. Time was when both flower and fruit were deemed medicinal; but though this is the case no longer, the roots are still employed in Ireland, and in the Highlands of Scotland, to dye dark-brown or chestnut colour. This plant is sometimes called water-can, or can-dock.

Near the spot where

"The water-lily to the light  
Her chalice rears of silver bright,"

the yellow water-lily too (*Nuphar lutea*) looks like a golden cup, as, at the end of a long stem, it floats upon the surface amid the large glossy oval leaves which belong to both these lilies. Its common name of brandy-bottle marks its peculiar odour; and its seed-vessel is also shaped like a bottle. The Turks make a cooling drink from these flowers, which they term *pufur*; this word being a corruption of their ancient name of this lily, *nuphar*.

"Reeds and water-flowers were growing  
By the green morass;  
While the fresh wild-flowers were glowing  
In the pleasant grass;  
Cool and sweet and very fair.  
Though the wild wind planted them,  
With a careless wing,  
Yet kind Nature granted them  
All the gifts of Spring;  
Nought they needed human care."



Growing beside them in the slow river, and next in beauty to the water-lilies, is the tall flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*), whose clusters of large pink blossoms overtop the waters, while their sharp-edged sword-like leaves, which are sometimes three feet long, wave beside them. But more like a tropical flower is that singular plant the water-soldier (*Stratiotes aloides*), which sends up numbers of rigid prickly leaves, like those of an aloe, while the root, by means of creeping runners, penetrates far down into the soil. It is most common in the pools of the eastern counties of England, and in the deep ditches among the fens of Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, and Norfolk, though it is rare in many parts of our island. It grows in the pools on Wandsworth Common, Surrey, but it was sown there by Dickson the botanist. The parent plant roots itself in the mud at the base, and, after flowering, sends out leaf-buds at the ends of the long runners. These rise to the surface, protrude roots and blossoms, and then sink to the bottom. Here they become fixed in the mud, sometimes ripen their seeds, and always, in their turn, produce fresh offsets, which again seek the surface of the water. The name of water-soldier and the botanic name are significant of the military appearance of the plant, the latter term being taken from the Greek word for a camp. The white flowers might well be likened to a martial plume, and its stiff leaves to a sword. It grows so rapidly that it often becomes a troublesome plant, when reared in artificial pieces of water.

Then, too, our yellow iris (*Iris Pseud-acorus*) might remind us of a floating banner, as its large and beautiful petals stream to the wind, and this is among our most common aquatics; while the water arrow-head (*Sagittaria sagittifolia*) is a frequent flower too, and is easily distinguished by its large arrow-shaped leaves. It rises, with its leaves and delicate flesh-coloured flowers, about five or six inches out of the water, and not all the smoke of our metropolis has as yet driven it away from its rivers. There it lies in the Thames, near the Temple Gardens and Hungerford Market, looking green and beautiful among the mud and refuse which often gathers near its large masses. But far more beautiful do those green glossy leaves seem when the flower is blooming in the quiet river of the country landscape, when the blue sky is reflected in the clear waters, and the birds come singing thither to hunt for the insects and shell-fish which hide among the foliage. The plant is cultivated for its roots in China and other eastern countries; and representations of it often occur on oriental porcelain. The bulb fixes itself in the solid earth below the water, and in the pools of warmer regions becomes much larger than in ours. A disagreeable flavour is found in it, which, however, can be removed by a mode of preparation.

Very handsome, too, though not brilliant in colour, is that plant commonly called the bulrush, but which is the great reed mace, or cat's tail (*Typha latifolia*), which sometimes grows to the height of eight feet above the water, and whose stout cylindrical stem is surmounted by a brown club-like spike. If we carry these spikes away, and allow the seeds to ripen, we shall find them in the course of time, by means of their lightness and

downy texture, disseminating themselves about the house, and catching hold of all things around. They have been used instead of feathers for stuffing beds. This is the plant which Rubens and other painters have put in their pictures of the Saviour, when he is described as having a reed placed in his hand by mocking priests.

Not less common, nor less conspicuous, is the branched bur-reed (*Sparganium ramosum*), which may easily be known by the large rough green balls—sometimes as large as a small apple—on which its flowers are set. Very pretty these globular heads of flowers are, when, in July, their soft white stamens make them seem down-covered balls, and look at a distance as if snow were resting in tufts on the branches of the plant. Beside them, the broad leaves of the water-plantain (*Alisma plantago*) often gather, and the stem, broad below and tapering to a point above, rises two or three feet high, and is covered here and there with pretty delicate pale lilac blossoms, which have three petals, and whose outline therefore is something like that of a club. The roots of this plant form very nutritious food. And then, too, may be seen from afar the tall spikes of the purple loose-strife, or willow-strife, or long purples, as the flower is called, looking among the sedges like a beautiful richly-tinted foxglove.

Leaving, however, the larger and more showy flowers of the stream, we must proceed to notice a singular-looking water-plant, called the common bladderwort (*Utricularia vulgaris*). It has bright yellow blossoms and leaves, which are all under water, and divided into segments as fine as hairs. A wonderful instance of design is seen in this plant, showing us, as all nature does when examined, the traces of God's skill and care. On the roots, stems, and leaves grow a number of little bottle-shaped bladders. Before flowering, the stem and leaves float by means of these bladders, which are at that time filled with water. But when the time of flowering comes on, and the plant is to meet the surface and expand its blossoms above it, then these vesicles become filled with air, fitting it the better to rise and float. Again, the plant, having performed its function of flowering, is destined in autumn to return to the bottom of the pool to ripen its seeds; and now again the air gives place to the water, and it sinks to the base. Aquatic insects sometimes stray into these bladders, and find themselves prisoners without means of escape.

A singular little plant, called the vernal starwort (*Callitriche verna*), is found everywhere on our streams, the leaves in pairs, and shining roots coming out from the joints. The upper leaves are broader than the stem, and lie exactly like a green star on the surface of the water. And lying in the waters, like a tangled mass of slender leaflets, forming themselves into a green plume, we may see that aquatic plant, called the water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), so named from its myriads of leaves, but having nothing ornamental in its small spike of greenish flowers, which rise to a few inches above the surface.

The common white rot (*Hydrocotyle vulgare*) is a pretty little plant, with round leaves like the garden nasturtium, and flowers of a reddish white, easily overlooked from their small size. It is called

also marsh penny-wort, fluke-wort, and sheep's bane; but the sheep take care that it shall not hurt them, for assuredly they will not crop one of its leaves.

A much prettier flower is the frog bit (*Hydrocharis morsus rance*), which floats on many streams in Kent and other counties, but which in some country places is rare. Its leaves are roundish, and its flowers of three petals, white, tinged with pink, and shaped much like the flowers of the garden spider-wort. Its name is taken from the words water, and to rejoice, and is thus expressive of its beauty, which is given to gladden the lover of nature. This plant increases by runners, which extend to a great length, sending out at the joints long roots, which penetrate a good way into the mud. Little pendulous buds hang by long footstalks to the joints, consisting of scales folded together; and if we open these, we may see the leaves of the future plant curiously folded within.

But few of the preceding plants can at all rival in beauty the large lilac flowers of the water-violet, or featherfoil (*Hottonia palustris*), which, rising far above the surface of the stream, nods to every breeze that ruffles it, and seems to tower above that lowlier but not less lovely flower, the forget-me-not (*Myosotis palustris*). Many a stream is rendered beautiful by the patches of blossoms of this flower, which look like pieces of blue enamel, and by their beauty deserve to have become the symbol of affection throughout Europe. Poets tell how a lady looked on this flower and desired it so much, that the knight who was by her side plunged in to gather it, but found the current too powerful for his strength.

"Then the blossoms blue to the bank he threw,  
Ere he sank in the eddying tide;  
And 'Lady, I'm gone, thine own knight true,  
Forget me not,' he cried.

"The farewell pledge the lady caught,  
And hence, as legends say,  
The flower is a sign to awaken thought  
Of the friends who are far away."

Everywhere about our streams lie patches of the white crowfoot (*Ranunculus aquatilis*), the floating leaves at the top fine as hairs, while those which are submerged are roundish; and besides the white flower, yellow crowfoots and spearworts grow at the sides along with the March marigold, which is in some places called the water dragon, and which, with the Swedes, is the first flower of spring.

But we must not stay to tell of the flowers which flourish all the better for the moisture that fills the lands near the stream; nor may we detail other flowers which properly grow in the stream itself. We would fain linger longer by the flowing waters, calling to mind their sweet music as, one by one, their flowers become present to our mental vision. They are so lovely, so connected in memory with quiet places, and waters glittering with sunbeams; with the singing of birds, and the rustling of green leaves; that we are loath to leave them. The cresses which grow among them, and which afford employment to so many poor in gathering and selling them; the blue brooklime, the pink polygonums, the water pimpinels, the little brookweed, and the tall valerians and rich willow herbs, must be looked for in our streams by

those who love wild flowers; and they will not be sought in vain: nor will the time be misspent if the study of these exquisite productions, with which the Creator has so profusely decorated our world, shall lead us to recognise his benevolent and paternal hand in these his minor works, and make us anxious to realize a personal interest in the love of that heart whence all these fruits of goodness spring.

### A FLOATING CITY.

THERE was hardly a breath of air out of the heavens to rustle the loftier branches of the stately trees that lined the river's side, as our vessel, urged on by the pressure of air upon her top-gallant and royal sails, and assisted materially by a favourable tide, progressed rapidly up the glorious Menam—that river of the distant kingdom of Siam which traverses the whole extent of country from north to south, and rushes into the sea a noble stream, deep and wide enough to accommodate the largest fleets in the world. The stars shone brightly over-head, despite the bright and golden light of the sunnier moon in that distant eastern clime; the waters of the river were calm, and reflective as a mirror; there was not a star above but had its counterpart below the wave, the one tranquil and immovable, while the other was restless and ever-changing. To watch the latter was a source of endless thought. It was the embodiment of Heber's poetic strain:—

"Reflected in the lake, I love  
To see the stars of heaven glow,  
So tranquil in the sky above,  
So restless in the wave below."

Nor was this light all that was reflected upon those waters on that serene and beautiful night. The thick low mangrove bushes that studded the water's edge on each side were literally teeming with countless millions of fire-flies, which, as the breath of the zephyr swept by, expanded their wings, the better to secure a footing on the trembling leaves, and then the intense and brilliant light upon their tails shot out like a flash of sudden lightning, and as suddenly disappeared again. Not all the diamonds of famed Golconda's mine, set with purest emeralds, could compare with the brilliancy of these minute creatures when their myriads of tiny lamps shone forth from amongst the bright green leaves of the mangrove bushes.

The night wore on, and still our vessel majestically swept the waves, and still the stars and moon shone bright, and the river-sides were decked with living lights. Anon, the breath of morning—first harbinger of coming day—came wafting rich odours from the fields and plains and mountainsides of Siam—the sweet incense, as it were, of the grateful earth refreshed by the heavy fall of the night dew. If there was anything to detract from the pleasurable enjoyment of such a night, it was the swarms of mosquitoes that invaded the vessel and buzzed around us incessantly, leaving the venom of their poisoned darts on our smarting hands and still more painfully wounded faces. The cool breath of morning proved, however, as a balm to these stings, and the plagues of the night

withdrew as the first grey tint of dawn appeared in the east. The river wound in a very serpentine course, in some parts so wide that we could barely distinguish objects on the opposite shore. About this time a legion of crows awoke, and, clamouring noisily to each other, proclaimed aloud the birth of another day. Flights of these thievish birds flew over-head in every direction, cawing joyously in expectation of an early breakfast. Five minutes more, and scores of noisy sparrows were twittering to each other. The day had now fairly broke, and the pilot declared that we were within a mile of the celebrated FLOATING CITY OF SIAM. The river was wide and deep, and the ship sailed merrily from shore to shore as the morning breeze freshened. Sometimes before we tacked, the bowsprit would run right into the centre of a forest of mangroves, to the discomfort and alarm of troops of wild monkeys and countless paroquets. Expectation was now on the tiptoe, for none of us had ever been in Siam before.

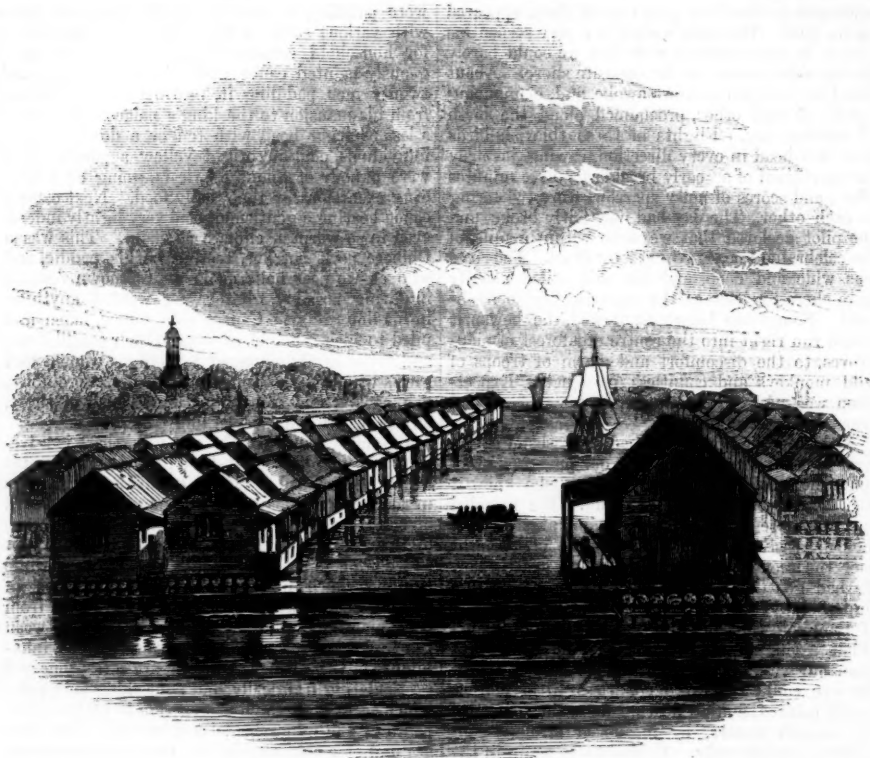
At length the breeze stiffened, and a bend in the river making the wind fair for our progress, away spun the ship like a happy courser who knew it was close upon its journey's end. We rounded one lofty forest-clad point, the sun at the same moment casting the glorious mantle of his light over the scene, and, before we knew exactly how we had got there, we found ourselves sailing in a ship of eight hundred tons through the main street of Bangkok, the capital of the kingdom of Siam! What a singular and beautiful sight here burst upon our view! On each side of us, as far as the eye could see, were countless little houses, neatly painted, and all floating upon the surface of the smooth waters, by means of strongly-constructed bamboo rafts. Behind these again in the distance rose the stately spires of the various pagodas or watts, sparkling in the early sunshine like costly gems, while far beyond all these was descried the solitary palace of the king of Siam, looming like some giant's castle above the pigmy habitations that surrounded it. In the houses, all was life, bustle, and confusion. Chinamen, with gay silk dresses and long pigtails, were shouting and screaming to one another as some vessel, incautiously moored in the river, swung heavily round to the tide, threatening to annihilate their fragile tenements. Old Siamese women armed themselves with long bamboo poles, to be prepared for an emergency and shove off any unwelcome intruders; Burmese were speculating in beetle-nut; natives of India were bartering with captains of Cochin China junks for the flesh of newly-slain alligators; while in the midst of this babel of languages and costume was to be seen the broad-brimmed hat of the American missionary, and the close-cropped pate of the Capuchin friar, labouring even in this distant land.

But the scene of activity to be witnessed in the floating houses was far surpassed by the moving tumult upon the river. Large Chinese junks, with a complement of full two hundred men, were hallooing and beating gongs and hoisting up their anchors; others, that had only just arrived, were equally busy about their moorings; European ships, of all sizes and nations, were hoisting in cargo or landing imported bale goods; whilst numberless canoes, chiefly moved about by women and girls,

were paddling to and fro in all directions, laden with various sorts of commodities for apparel or for household consumption. Now came a gorgeously-painted canoe with gilt figure-head, and twenty men paddling it, bearing some nobleman from his mansion to the king's palace; then came a less aspiring boat, with ten or a dozen meagre individuals clad in bright yellow apparel: these were a body of Siamese priests, going on a begging excursion for their daily food. Next came a canoe bearing a gentleman clad very lightly indeed, even in so warm a climate as Siam. This was a Chinese pork butcher, resting on his paddle, and who as we pass hails us in an unknown tongue, inquiring possibly whether we wanted anything in his line to-day. Canoes next follow, laden and piled to such a height as to peril their equilibrium, and yet skilfully managed by solitary women and girls, who are the venders of fruits, vegetables, fish, cooked and raw meats, fowls, and, in short, all the luxuries of eastern life.

By-and-by, as we make our way, there is a tremendous hubbub right a-head; rapidly the tumult grows louder, and is caught by all the neighbours in the floating houses and all the people on board of the vessels and boats in the river. The cause of this commotion is presently explained, for just as we are coming to an anchor, the tide meanwhile running down like a sluice, a whole mass of floating houses, which have accidentally broke from their moorings, are seen heaving in sight between the junks and a Siamese man-of-war. The inhabitants of these runaway houses are screaming and gesticulating frantically, and flourishing long poles which seem to threaten destruction to all the occupants of the minor boats and canoes. Now they are foul of a ship's cable, but anon they are afloat again; now they sweep by us like so many steamers bent upon a race, and in five minutes more they have disappeared round the corner, and will be seen or heard of no more till the next favourable tide. Advantageously for them, the river has so many bends and turnings that they will be sure to be brought up by some projecting headland before they go much further; but were it not for this circumstance the tide would surely carry them out to sea, and then farewell to Mr. Chinaman and all his noisy neighbours. The excitement occasioned by this runaway detachment of houses soon abates, for such things are of every-day occurrence in Bangkok; the floating venders are again busy crying their goods, and the people have subsided once more into the comparative calm of every-day life, when we step into the ship's boat and are speedily landed—I beg pardon—I mean transhipped to the floating house of a friend. The flag that has braved a thousand years is waving over his residence; so we may calculate, with brother Jonathan, that our friend is a Britisher.

Finding ourselves in our new quarters, the first thing we inspect is the floating house itself. This, then, consists of three neatly-painted apartments—a hall or sitting-room, a bed-room, and an office: the first about eight feet square; the second, five; and the third, three and a half. There are windows and doors in every direction, and in front of the house there is a little verandah with a wooden balustrade—a very necessary precaution for a stranger on a dark night, as he might easily by



FLOATING CITY OF SIAM.

mistake step from this verandah into eight fathom water and a rapid tide. The furniture is of the simplest description, consisting of a table, a few chairs and a bamboo couch, an iron bedstead, a chest of drawers, and a clothes-horse (the river being the universal wash-hand-stand); there is also a writing-desk, together with files for papers and newspapers. This constitutes the furniture of our countryman, who yet probably is worth not far short of twenty thousand pounds, with which amount when doubled he will one day visit his native land.

The next house, into which you can easily step from the verandah, belongs to the same establishment, and is allotted to the servants for culinary and other domestic purposes. In size it resembles the other, and contains as many rooms; the servants sleep in one and cook in another, while the third apartment serves for provisions. Having visited these two houses, we have now a fair conception of every other house among the seventy or eighty thousand dwellings which constitute the floating city of Bangkok. There is only this difference, that whereas our host is obliged to maintain two houses to complete his establishment, most of the natives content themselves with one. In one room they sit, and eat and drink; in another, they all sleep together; and the third serves as a warehouse or magazine—for almost every man is in some way or other connected with trade, and will sell or

barter anything in his house, from his own daughter to the favourite pet rat, which all the Siamese keep, and which protects them from the intrusion of other vermin of its own species, by expelling them *vi et armis*.

It is now long past twelve, and having breakfasted rather earlier than usual, we are beginning to inquire anxiously about lunch. By-and-by the loud notes of a trumpet awaken the stillness that reigns around. We are eager to ascertain the motives for these war-notes, and are gravely assured that it is only to apprise the world at large that his gracious majesty has been pleased to dine, and that he accordingly condescends to grant his royal permission to his subjects to do so likewise. There is immediately a stir amongst the platters of our Siamese neighbours, and very grateful odours of many nice things; so, having the king's permission, we sit down to lunch and enjoy a sample of Siamese fruits and vegetables. First comes the durian, large and stately, reckoned by eastern epicures to be truly delicious. Faugh! Carry it away and bury it, or throw it into the river; burn perfumes in the room, or bring chloride of lime, for the stench of that fruit is enough to make one faint. But what have we here? Mangosteins, ramboteens, plantains of all sizes and colours, the luscious mango, and innumerable other truly delicious fruits. Nature has indeed been bountiful to the soil of Siam. As for the vegetables, how an



epicure would gloat over them: never were such things tasted in the cold north! The fowls, the ducks, and the river and sea fish are all excellent; but the meat is badly flavoured, and lean withal. Well, it is not much to be regretted, for the less meat you eat, the healthier you are likely to be in such a hot climate as Siam. At length lunch is over, and though we have feasted luxuriously, there is hardly a native in the capital that has not had as good a meal.

The sultry heat of the day has now become intense, and all employment is suspended: not a boat is to be seen on the river; not a man, woman, or child is visible in the verandahs of the floating houses, for the doors are all shut and the inmates are fast asleep: they are having their daily siesta; and such is the universal lassitude that prevails, that however resolutely we bear up against it for a time, sleep eventually overcomes us, and so we also slumber in the cool pleasant shade of the floating house, lulled by the rippling of the water beneath and round the raft on which we float. Three o'clock comes, and the doctor arrives; not the medical practitioner, but the sea-breeze so designated in the east from the beneficial and exhilarating effects it is sure to produce upon the drowsy inhabitants. We accordingly wake refreshed and ready to prosecute our inquiries.

In order to pursue our investigations, then, just step into this canoe, taking care, however, that you do not tilt it over. Now we are paddling along the shady side of the river at the rate of several miles an hour. What's that? a boat load of sugar coming from the interior for shipment to Liverpool: and that? another boat with pepper for the same destination. Why, what a wealthy country this Siam must be! Every shop we pass exhibits specimens of its riches—elephants' and tigers' tusks, gamboge and indigo, spices of every variety, rice, drugs, lead, and other precious ore—all brought from the interior, where also there are countless sugar-cane plantations and whole tracts of country laid out with rice-fields. Rich, however, as Siam is in various productions, we need hardly remind our readers that it is enveloped in the shades of heathen darkness; but happily there are labourers in the field, who are busy sowing precious seed. That house which we are passing is the missionary establishment: the little wooden houses occupied by these benevolent men look comfortable and neat, and as a special favour they are permitted to be built upon *terra firma*. It was our host (who is himself building a perfect palace on the banks) that procured for them this exemption, for, as a general rule, none in Bangkok, save the royal family and the highest nobles, are permitted to build upon the solid ground. Amongst these pioneers of evangelization is a doctor, a schoolmaster, and a printer; and as we paddle along we encounter one of the missionaries distributing Siamese tracts amongst the natives;\* while a little farther down we pass

the doctor's shop, where he sits and sees patients, and distributes medicines gratuitously. Yonder, too, we are sorry to see, is the Roman catholic chapel; for Rome seems to delight to tread in the footsteps of protestant missionaries, and mingle tares with their wheat.

We have now arrived at one of the Siamese temples, and are permitted to survey it both outside and inside; the court-yard is spacious and well paved, abounding with flower-vases and grotesque-looking images of every conceivable bird, beast, and reptile. The temple itself is a stately building, with a lofty capacious central room, surrounded by smaller ones allotted to the priests; incense-rods are burning; there is gold and silver tapestry, and the images are of the same costly materials, set with precious stones. As we are about to retrace our steps, our attention is arrested by a concourse of people congregated in the front court-yard, and who we find are busy preparing for a funeral. The dead man is laid upon a lofty bier, under which, in a species of oven, are piled fagot upon fagot of firewood, while garlands of flowers are tastefully arranged over the richly-worked linen cloth that hides the corpse from view. We hurry away from the spot and get into our canoe, in doing which a bystander tells us that the dead man was alive and hearty at eight o'clock this morning. Cholera, however, had marked him for its victim. As we paddle away, the dense smoke rose up high into the air like a white column against the clear blue sky, and by the time that we reached home again, doubtless all that remained of the robust man who had opened his eyes to daylight that morning in health, little dreaming of death, was a handful of ashes scattered far and wide by the fresh breeze of evening—a solemn theme indeed for thought and reflection!

Before reaching home, having a permit, we visit the temples of the two white elephants, so much

to give some account of the contents of the previous one. This is a necessary condition in order to receive a second. Those who come from neighbouring countries receive books freely at all hours of the day. There are many cheering evidences that the books are read, and their contents well understood, and many opportunities of imparting religious instruction and advice are presented. And thus, slowly but most effectually, the people are receiving a knowledge of Christianity.

"The missionaries are also engaged in improving their types and general printing operations. In addition to furnishing the Siamese with the printed words of eternal life, and a religious literature, they render much valuable assistance to those of the natives who have mechanical and artistic tastes, by giving them valuable suggestions whenever it is in their power. The Siamese types used in Bishop Fallegoix's Grammar, a beautiful and valuable work which has been recently published, were cast at the mission foundry. The first volume of a neat and convenient edition of the laws of Siam has been issued from the mission press. The second volume is now being printed. This work is printed at the expense of Kh'un Môte, a young Siamese nobleman of much promise and talent. And it is sincerely hoped that his intercourse with the missionaries may incline him to labour assiduously for the moral and intellectual improvement of his people, and that religious truth may be brought to bear upon his own mind. Religious toleration is largely extended towards the missionary. The king of Siam lately made in substance the following statement: 'Siam is a great country! and, from ancient time till now, Siamese, Chinese, Malays, Portuguese, Englishmen, and Americans have each been allowed to worship after their own religion; and they shall still, so long as they behave well.'

"Will not the friends of missions," ask the missionaries, 'pray that God will accompany the pages of his own precious truth with the gracious influences of his Holy Spirit, as they find access to the palace, the homes of the nobles, the hamlets of the poor, and the innumerable towns and villages that stand the many serpentine and beautiful streams with which Siam abounds?'"

\* The following particulars, from the "Christian Spectator" for March, relative to missions at Siam, may be here appropriately introduced:—

"The missionaries connected with the American Baptist Missionary Society are diligently engaged in the distribution of tracts and religious books in Siam. They have daily numerous calls from all classes of men. Those who have not previously received a book have one presented to them, and are informed, that, in order to receive another, they must be able

venerated by the Siamese. Here idolatry is lavish indeed in its tokens of regard, for the rooms where these huge unwieldy creatures are kept are carpeted with costly gold and silver-wrought mats, which are soon soiled and worn out by the heavy tread of the elephants. To keep these in order forms a considerable item in the treasury expenditure, and causes a frightful waste of money.

By the time we reach our host's floating house again, the sun is far in the west; but the river presents a lively scene once more. Besides the shipping, and the boats and canoes, there are shoals of ducks and geese, and other domestic water-fowl, swimming to their respective homes, from a day's foraging amongst the bulrushes that cover the banks of the many small outlets of the river. But these are not the only swimmers; for, the labours of the day being over, men, women, and children take to the water, with small distinction of rank or sex. They all bathe in their clothes, just as they go about when dressed, and on coming out of the water they cluster round a fire, and so let their clothes dry on their backs. Yet seldom or never do any of these amphibious people catch cold. All can swim well, and so entirely aquatic are they in their habits, that though the houses are linked together with chains, and are easy of ingress or egress by simply passing from one verandah to another, a Siamese will invariably step into his small canoe, although he has only to call upon a neighbour three doors off. The houses are in rows of three or four deep, with spaces between each, and intersecting channels between every eighth or tenth house—the latter being the number usually linked together, and moored at each extremity to poles of immense size and strength driven deeply into the bed of the river at low-water ebb.

And now our day's exploits are over, and the sun sets. Crows are flying over-head to their roosting-places; hideous-looking tokays\* are croaking from the dark walls of the floating houses: night gathers round us rapidly; the first star twinkles faintly from afar, and simultaneously the whole city and the shipping burst into one magnificent illumination. It is the Chinese feast of the lantern. Red, blue, white, every coloured light is displayed in every imaginable direction. Festoons of light hang from the yards of the Siamese ships and the Chinese junks; the verandahs of the floating houses have festoons also, and the stately spires of the pagodas are one rich mass of light. We look up towards heaven, and behold countless wonderful lights there: we look around us, and perceive there, too, many artificial lights: we look below us, in the calm blue waters of the Menam, and the lights there reflected are beyond computation: even in the air the fire-fly shows its tiny lamp. There is but one glorious light wanting, and that is the light of the true knowledge of the gospel! May it soon be supplied.

The present king of Siam, who has only just succeeded to the throne, is an accomplished scholar. As one proof of his desire for improvement, he has sent his own sons, and also persuaded many of the principal men of Siam to send their children, for education to Singapore. He seems disposed to aid every effort for the benefit of his people.

#### SELF-POSSESSION IN MOMENTS OF PERIL.

"ABOUT the year 1778," says his biographer, "Mr. Cecil was appointed to two small livings at Lewes, in Sussex. At this time a very singular providence occurred to him on his way from London to serve these churches. He was detained in town till noon, in consequence of which he did not arrive on East Grinstead common till after it was dark. On this common he met a man on horse-back, who appeared to be intoxicated, and ready to fall from his horse. Mr. C., with his usual benevolence, rode up to him in order to prevent his falling, when the man immediately seized the reins of his horse. Mr. C., perceiving that he was in bad hands, endeavoured to break away, but the man threatened to knock him down if he repeated the attempt. Three other men immediately rode up, placing Mr. C. in the midst of them. On perceiving his danger, it struck him, 'Here is an occasion of faith;' and that direction occurred to him, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee.' He secretly lifted up his heart to God, imploring that deliverance which he alone could give. One of the men, who seemed to be captain of the gang, asked him who he was, and whither he was going. Mr. C. told them very frankly his name and profession. The leader said, 'Sir, I know you, and have heard you preach at Lewes: let the gentleman's horse go; we wish you good night.' Mr Cecil had about him 16*l.* of queen Anne's bounty belonging to his churches, which he had been to London to receive, and the loss of which would have been to him at that time a large sum; yet his person and property were alike untouched."

An incident in the early life of Thomas Burchell, a devoted missionary to the West Indies, is even more striking than that just mentioned.

Mr. Burchell was in early life a cloth manufacturer in the west of England. His first piece of cloth he sold to a person in Bristol, who, a few days afterwards, was reported to be on the point of insolvency. With the energy which characterized him throughout his whole life, he determined, if possible, to regain legal possession of his property, of which it appeared he was about to be defrauded. It occurred to him, that by walking all night he should be in Bristol some hours earlier than if he waited for the coach, which did not start till morning. He therefore set out at once, and had walked nearly twenty miles by daybreak. He now approached the Severn, at a point where he expected to find some one who would ferry him over. As he reached it, he saw a boat push off hastily from the land. He hailed the crew, but they only plied their oars more vigorously, and were soon out of hearing.

Looking round he saw another boat just pulling out, and feeling that if he did not succeed in gaining a passage in her, he should fail of attaining the object for which he had made such efforts, he used all the means in his power to attract the attention of the boatmen and induce them to return. It soon became evident that they had noticed him, and seemed debating whether they should return or not. He at length had the satisfaction of seeing them pull for the shore. As they

\* A spotted lizard peculiar to Siam.

approached, it struck him that he had never seen five such desperate-looking ruffians. After some objection on their part, they told him to get in. He had not long done so before he found that he was in most undesirable company. They began whispering together, and the few words he caught showed him that he was in extreme peril. He then perceived that they were steering in the opposite direction to that in which he wished to go. He spoke to them of this, when one of the number, an Irishman, openly and resolutely avowed their design of murdering him. They all then set up a loud shout in confirmation of their purpose, as though to urge one another on to the deed.

From their horrid oaths and avowed intentions he now found that they took him for a spy in the preventive service, and he perceived some kegs of spirits covered with straw in the bottom of the boat. It was in vain he assured them that they were mistaken in their suspicions; they only renewed their imprecations and threats of immediate and signal vengeance. Finding that they scoffed at his protestations, he ceased, and began to speak with them of God, a judgment, and eternity. After speaking in this strain for some little while, he observed the countenance of one of them to relax, and a tremor to pass over the frame of another. Still they did not alter the boat's course, but continued steadily rowing in the wrong direction.

He then addressed each one solemnly and separately, and this with so much evident sincerity and deep feeling, that the captain of the crew cried out, "I say, I can't stand this. I don't believe he is the man we took him for. We must let him go. Where do you want to be put out, sir?" The traveller replied that he wished to be taken up the Avon as far as Bristol. The man said that they could not go so far as that, as they dared not pass Pill; but that they would take him as far as possible, and put him in a way to continue his journey by the shortest route. He thanked them, and begged them to make the utmost speed, for his business was urgent. Finding them so subdued, he spoke to them of their sinful lives, and pointed them to Christ as their Saviour. They all appeared impressed by his statements and conduct, and not only refused to receive what he had stipulated to pay as fare, but offered to forward a keg of spirits to any place he would mention—an offer which was of course declined. On landing, one of the men accompanied him to a farm-house, and induced the occupant to drive him to Bristol. He, by these means, succeeded in reaching his journey's end at an early hour, and in regaining possession of the greater part of his property.

Even had the results of this perilous boat voyage stopped here, it would have afforded a striking instance of the blessings which attend Christian fidelity and boldness, springing from a sense of God's presence and access to him in prayer. But more remains to be told. Many years afterwards, on Mr. Burchell's return from Jamaica, he was at a small village in the neighbourhood of Cheddar Cliffs, when a man accosted him, offered his hand, and appeared surprised that he was not recognised. It proved to be the smuggler who had guided Mr. Burchell to the farm-house. After some conversation, he said, "Ah! sir, after your talk we none of us could follow that trade again.

I have since learned to be a carpenter, and am doing very well in this village, and attend a chapel three or four miles off. And our poor captain never forgot to pray for you till his dying day. He was quite an altered man, took his widowed mother to live with him, and became a good husband, a good father, and a good neighbour. Before, every one was afraid of him, he was such a desperate fellow; afterwards, he was as tame as a lamb. He opened a little shop for the maintenance of his family; and, what was better still, held prayer meetings in his house. The other three men are now in a merchant vessel, and are very steady and well behaved."

Rarely has there been a more striking instance of heroism, calmness, and presence of mind, inspired and sustained by Christian faith, than in the conduct of a peasant's wife in the Peak of Derbyshire, quoted by Howitt, on the authority of a minister of the Society of Friends, who was personally acquainted with the facts of the case. It is likewise recorded by Wilson Armistead, in a volume published with the sanction of the same body. We give it in an abridged form.

In one of the thinly-peopled dales of the Peak of Derbyshire stood a lone house, far from neighbours, inhabited by a farmer and his wife. Such is, or at least was wont to be, the primitive simplicity of this district, that it was usual for persons to go to bed without taking any precautions to bolt or bar the doors, in the event of any of the inmates not having come home at the usual hour of retiring to rest. This was frequently the practice with the family in question, especially on market-days, when the farmer having occasion to go to the nearest town often did not return until late. One evening, when the husband was absent, the wife, being up-stairs, heard some one open the door and enter the house. Supposing it to be her husband, she lay awake, expecting him to come up-stairs. As the usual time elapsed and he did not come, she rose and went down, when, to her terror and astonishment, she saw a sturdy fellow searching the house for plunder. At the first view of him, as she afterwards said, she felt ready to drop; but being naturally courageous, and of a deeply religious disposition, she soon recovered sufficient self-possession to suppress the cry which was rising to her lips, to walk with apparent firmness to a chair which stood on one side of the fire-place, and seat herself in it. The marauder immediately seated himself in another chair, which stood opposite, and fixed his eyes upon her with a most savage expression. Her courage was almost spent; but, recollecting herself, she put up a prayer to the Almighty for protection, and threw herself upon his providence, for "vain was the help of man." She immediately felt her courage revive, and looked stedfastly at the ruffian, who now drew a large claspknife from his pocket, opened it, and, with a murderous expression in his eyes, appeared ready to spring upon her. She, however, showed no visible emotion, but continued to pray earnestly, and to look on the man with calm seriousness. He rose, glanced first at her, then at the knife; again he seemed to hesitate, and wiped the weapon upon his hand; then once more glanced at her, she all the while continuing to sit calmly, calling earnestly upon God. Suddenly a panic appeared to



seize him; he blanched beneath her still, fixed gaze, closed his knife, and went out. At a single spring she reached the door, shot the bolt with a convulsive rapidity, and fell senseless on the floor. When she recovered, she recognised her husband's well-known step at the door, and heard him calling out in surprise at finding it fastened. Rising, she admitted him, and, in tones tremulous with agitation and gratitude, told him of her danger and deliverance.

The above incidents, illustrative of the power of prayer to sustain the mind in the most critical emergencies, are extracted from a little work, just published, entitled "*REMARKABLE ESCAPES FROM PERIL*;" in which is gathered together, and presented under appropriate headings, an array of examples of divine interposition, in answer to the prayer of faith, that cannot fail to convince any candid mind of the existence of an ever-watching and ever-working Providence. If any of our readers are troubled with sceptical misgivings upon a subject of such vital importance to all who are obliged to engage in the great battle of life, we earnestly press them to give this work a thoughtful perusal. And as a proof that it advocates no fanatical views upon the doctrine of divine Providence, irreconcilable with the deductions of science and the teachings of enlightened philosophy, we subjoin the following judicious remarks on the *principle and mode* in which providential interpositions on our behalf are effected.

It is not, says the writer, by *miraculous* intervention, not by a subversion of the laws of nature, not by a dissolution of the connexion between cause and effect; but by the control and superintendence of natural agencies and general laws, adapting them to special emergencies and individual cases. The opponents of the doctrine of Providence have generally misconceived or misrepresented this fact. Thus Pope writes:—

"Think we, like some weak prince, the Eternal Cause  
Prone for his favourites to reverse his laws?  
Shall burning Etna, if a sage requires,  
Forget to thunder, or recall his fires?  
When the loose mountain trembles from on high,  
Shall gravitation cease if you go by?"

We do not think the Eternal to be "altogether such an one as ourselves," and do not expect him to reverse his laws for our sakes. If the saint or the sage recklessly violates the laws of nature, or, rather, the laws of God in nature, the insulted laws will avenge themselves in his destruction. Even the Eternal Son would not tempt the Lord by casting himself down from the pinnacle of the temple. Nevertheless, the ancient promise stands good—"He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." That is to say, we may expect protection in the path of duty. If, in obedience to the will of God, we have to encounter imminent perils, we may hope for signal and providential deliverances; "and that not through the powers of nature disobeying their own laws, but through other powers in nature opportunely interposing to stop, to turn aside, or otherwise to modify their operation. The volcano may burst, the tempest may rage, and the cliff may fall, an instant before or an instant after the time when these events might have been followed by fatal consequences; or some passing impulse of feeling may

have hurried the individual away; or some other power of nature may have hastened to shelter or defend him—and all by a special arrangement intended by God from the very beginning." It is, then, either ignorance or perverse misrepresentation on the part of the deniers of Providence to charge those who believe it with expecting continued miracles. The distinction between the two is broad and clear. The age of miracles is past—the age of Providence continues. "This is, in fact," says Isaac Taylor, "the great miracle of Providence—that no miracles are needed to accomplish its purposes."

#### AN EPISODE IN THE REIGN OF LOUIS XV.

WHEN Louis XV, king of France, exclaimed, "After me, the flood," he only prophesied too truly. He was quick-sighted enough to perceive that the dissolution of French society could not long be arrested; and he was sufficiently selfish to remain satisfied, provided matters lasted as long as himself in the state in which he had found them. The natural order of things seemed to be reversed; evil was called good, and good evil; absolutism and corruption were the two great principles of government; statesmen and priests ridiculed almost openly the ideas for which they enforced outward obedience by the rack, the prison, and the hulks. We might illustrate these remarks in a variety of anecdotes taken from the annals of the eighteenth century; but the following sketch will be amply sufficient, we believe, to give to our readers a faithful idea of the disastrous epoch which preceded and prepared the cataclysm of 1789.

The abbé de Pontivy was, in 1773, a humble parish priest at Versailles. Unlike most persons belonging to his order, he had refused to purchase benefices at the expense of his own conscience; and whilst he saw some of his college friends riding post rather unscrupulously in the way to worldly fortune, he never would curry favour with the regent, the king, or Madame de Pompadour, the king's mistress. As a natural consequence, the abbé de Pontivy lived in obscurity; and we add, that he considered as a privilege what his more ambitious companions esteemed a mark of disgrace. Imagine, then, the surprise he felt, when, upon returning one evening to his home in the rue de Satory, he found a ministerial despatch, inclosing his appointment to a seat in the council of state. It was impossible to account for such an event, either by intrigue or otherwise; and yet the fact was plain enough, in black and white, indorsed by his majesty, and countersigned by the prime minister. Our abbé, after reflecting for some time, came to the conclusion that an uncle of his, who was captain in the guards, had lent him a helping hand after many years' forgetfulness; he therefore resolved upon paying him a visit the very next day, on his way to the audience of the minister.

We ought to have said that the abbé de Pontivy, although considered a man of sincere piety amongst those even of his own communion, was very far from being led astray by that spirit of bigotry which disgraced the great majority of the Gallican church during the seventeenth and



eighteenth centuries. He really sought, according to the imperfect light which he possessed, to glorify his heavenly Master; and he had long been of opinion that saints were not to be looked for in that assembly of nondescript ecclesiastics whose sole business was in the brilliant galleries of Versailles. M. de Pontivy, of course, was put down by his colleagues as a puritan; some said that he leaned towards Jansenism, others that he had secretly embraced Protestantism. The latter accusation might have arisen from the abbé's acquaintance with one of the most distinguished officers of the French army, M. de la Guette, who belonged to the persecuted Huguenots. The penal measures enforced against heretics since the revocation of the edict of Nantes still existed, indeed, in all their vigour; but the king had found it, nevertheless, expedient not to deprive himself of the services of a great many eminent men, who, if out of the pale of the Roman catholic church, were amongst his most faithful and devoted subjects. He allowed them to retain their religious opinions, and even created for them a special military decoration. M. de la Guette, on his return to Versailles after the seven years' war, hired a house near the abbé de Pontivy, and the usual intercourse which takes place between neighbours gradually ripened into friendship. The officer was attracted by the priest's evident candour, and by the liberality of his disposition; the priest, in his turn, could not help comparing the consistency so evident in M. de la Guette's character with the hypocrisy of the time-servers about him. They often talked together on religious subjects, and as M. de Pontivy was quite earnest in his search after truth, he soon came to view Protestantism more favourably than would have been agreeable to his diocesan. Still attached, however, by very slender ties to the Romish church, he felt disposed to encourage a complete system of reforms within its communion, and he rejoiced in his promotion to the council of state chiefly because it would enable him to raise his voice in favour both of the Jansenists and the Huguenots.

When the news was spread abroad that the abbé de Pontivy had attracted the notice of the minister, a great many people came to congratulate him, but principally from interested motives. M. de la Guette and a few others, however, were quite sincere in their good wishes for the new councillor.

"I am delighted at your appointment," said the officer to his friend, "because I know that you will have a larger sphere of usefulness. May you be preserved from the corruption which is destroying society!"

The next day our abbé made his *début* on the political stage; at an early hour he went to the palace, where the chancellor had appointed to meet him, and was almost immediately introduced in the council chamber. He found there all the ministers busily engaged, and secretaries transcribing despatches, or making extracts from a mass of papers which covered the table. As soon as the usher had announced "Monsieur l'abbé de Pontivy," the minister rose with a very courteous smile, and declared in most flattering terms the pleasure he had felt in calling to a seat in the council a person so truly devoted to the church and the king.

"Really, my lord," answered the abbé, "I am quite at a loss how best to express both my astonishment and my gratitude—that an individual so utterly inefficient as I know I am——"

"Pshaw! monsieur," said the minister, "no apologies, if you please; to cut the matter short, I am glad to see you here; you will help us a little, and I have no doubt that you will find your new position a pleasant one. My friend the comptroller-general," added he, turning to an ignoble-looking man in clerical costume, who was signing some state papers, "has on his list a benefice for you; three thousand livres a year are not too much when one has a position to keep up."

M. de Pontivy clearly felt that something was expected from him. He had not sufficient faith in the disinterestedness of government to believe that the simple desire of rewarding merit was at the root of all these liberalities. He even entertained for a moment the idea of declining altogether the brilliant situation offered to him; but then he thought that he would wait: he might render efficient services to the persecuted minority in his new post, and if any thing disagreeable occurred, it would always be time enough to withdraw.

The gentleman whom the minister had addressed as the comptroller-general rose from the table where he was sitting, and coming in his turn to M. de Pontivy, complimented him in a few words. "There is one thing, monsieur," said he, "which I hope you will see the propriety of discontinuing. I hear that you are the author of the paper against M. de Voltaire, which was published in the 'French Mercury' for last week——"

"And I have been told," continued the premier, "that you write pamphlets in favour of the Jansenists."

"Gentlemen," replied the abbé, "do not the very terms of my appointment bind me to devote myself to the interests of the church and the king?"

"Certainly," said the comptroller-general; "but you know what official communications mean, and how they ought to be interpreted. You are surely shrewd enough to be aware, that when we recommend due attention to the good of the church, we allude neither to points of dogma nor to questions of discipline. We simply perceive the necessity, especially in these present times, of keeping unimpaired the influence of the ecclesiastical body. Now the progress of philosophical doctrines being such as it is, and considering how strongly the public is prejudiced in favour of Voltaire, Rousseau, and the other writers belonging to that coterie, I must say that it would be rather foolish in us to make them our enemies."

"It is only a few days ago," observed M. de Pontivy, "that a volume of the 'Encyclopédie' was burnt by the common hangman."

The comptroller-general burst into a fit of laughter. "Ah! my dear sir," exclaimed he, "the persons whom we burn are not long in rising from their ashes. For convenience' sake, we are obliged to make an *auto-da-fé* to the squeamishness of a few good folks; but, so far as I am concerned, M. de Voltaire is quite at liberty to circulate all his works throughout the kingdom, when he has given us the three or four copies reserved for puri-

fication by fire. It would never do for us to get into a squabble with those gentlemen."

M. de Pontivy was rather astonished to hear a priest utter such sentiments, for the comptroller-general, as we have already said, belonged likewise to the church.

"I am quite grieved," said he, with a feeling of chagrin which he could hardly suppress; "I am quite grieved at finding that the ministers of religion are seeking support from the greatest enemies of religion. Yes, sir, you will allow me to deny the necessity of uniting ourselves with impiety and vice. It is quite indispensable that we preach the gospel; but I do not think it of any consequence at all that we should preserve our influence, taking that word with the meaning you put upon it, and at the cost of faith itself."

"Do you hear our new councillor?" asked the comptroller, addressing the minister with an air of archness: "he speaks exactly like a Calvinist preacher in a meeting-house pulpit."

"Or like one of those rascally Jansenists whom I sent to the Bastille yesterday," continued the minister.

This was too much for M. de Pontivy. "You must excuse me, monseigneur," said he, "for declining the promotion which you have so kindly conferred upon me. I perceive that my views are not in accordance with his majesty's government, and I do not feel justified in accepting a post in which I could render no service to my country."

"Now, my dear sir," replied the minister, "you are too easily discouraged. I hope you are not offended at the remarks I made; I respect your scruples, and I do not accept your resignation. We shall soon be better acquainted with each other. Good morning, Monsieur de Pontivy; we meet here to-morrow at eleven o'clock." So saying, the minister of Louis xv bowed the abbé out of the room.

M. de Pontivy descended the grand staircase of Versailles with emotions which it would be difficult to analyze. He had never before, in the course of his life as a clergyman, suffered from the anxiety and uneasiness he now felt. He hardly knew what determination to fix upon, and it was with no slight curiosity that he shaped his course towards the barracks of the French guards, where his uncle, the Chevalier de Pontivy, was on duty. It is unnecessary to trouble the reader by putting once more before him the usual phraseology of compliments and good wishes; suffice it to say, that the abbé's surmises were perfectly correct. The chevalier *had* been the chief instrument in procuring for him what everybody then thought a most enviable piece of preferment; and if any one of those who peruse these pages have happily known by experience the racking pains of ambition, they will wonder, as the chevalier did, at the unconcern with which the new councillor of state bore his honours. "Why, nephew," said he, "I thought that you would have expressed some satisfaction at this turn of fortune. Only think; it is a promotion which has cost you no trouble—a piece of good luck brought within your grasp. I can tell you, that many of our courtiers here work very hard before they get what I have obtained for you."

"My dear uncle," answered the abbé, "I feel

most deeply your kindness, and am truly grateful for it; but—"

"And then," interrupted the chevalier, "there's your sister Amélie in a fair way of getting on, too—appointed maid of honour to the princess Adelaide.\* I hope you do not object to that?"

The abbé seemed positively thunderstruck. Councillor of state—an income of three thousand livres—his sister maid of honour to one of the princesses. "You must be mistaken, sir," said he to the chevalier; "what you say about Amélie is not correct."

"Nothing can be more authentic," replied the officer. "But I am not surprised at your being still ignorant of it; the commission was only signed this morning, and a messenger has started a quarter of an hour ago to take it to your house."

"Amélie at court!—my sister in a place where corruption is the only title to eminence; where a premium is offered to every vice!—no, never! Ah! I see now," continued the abbé, after a moment's pause; "I see now the reason for all that has taken place since yesterday. They intended, no doubt, to purchase my consent to the destruction of my sister!"

As he pronounced these words, M. de Pontivy hurried away without even taking leave of the chevalier.

A person less agitated would have noticed with interest the extraordinary movement which prevailed through the streets of Versailles. Groups of twenty, thirty, fifty individuals, every now and then, seemed actively occupied in discussing some important news; patrols were marching in every direction, and couriers riding at full gallop dashed along amidst the inquiring spectators. Rumours had been spreading for some time, to the effect that king Louis xv was dying; and his government was so unpopular with the nation at large, that precautions were taken on a most extensive scale to prevent the general satisfaction from manifesting itself too openly. After a short illness, the monarch lay struggling with the last enemy, and endeavouring to stifle the voice of conscience which was now speaking loud about Christ and a judgment to come. "Is he dead? Are there any hopes of his recovery?" Such were the two questions put and answered on all sides; but they fell almost unheeded upon the ears of the abbé de Pontivy, as he hastened towards the rue de Satory. When he entered the drawing-room, he found his sister Amélie and M. de la Guette engaged in a very animated conversation with an individual whose dress plainly showed him to be one of the officers of the king's household. "M. Councillor," said that last-named personage, "you are come just in the right time. Would you believe that we cannot persuade mademoiselle to accept the honour conferred upon her by his majesty?"

"If my influence, sir," replied M. de Pontivy, "is of any use, it will only be to strengthen the lady in her resolution. We decline the favour offered, and we entreat the king to bestow it upon some person more accustomed to the usage and habits of the court."

"You have heard my friend's answer," said in his turn M. de la Guette. "I told you no untruth

\* One of the daughters of Louis xv.

when I stated to you the objections he entertained to mademoiselle's appearing at the palace. Is any written reply necessary?"

"Monsieur de la Guette," returned the official, apparently highly mortified, "you take very useless trouble in misinterpreting the gentleman's sentiments. Am I to understand, sir," continued he, addressing M. de Pontivy, "that your sister refuses?"

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"Then," muttered the court messenger, as he left the house, "some people, I must say, are outrageously puritanical in their notions."

When the three friends were left together, their first feeling was one of heartfelt joy. They had done their duty; and the satisfaction they derived from this conviction did not allow them to realize the fact, that they had in all probability, by one act of courage, given mortal offence to persons who were powerful enough to ruin them for ever.

M. de la Guette made the remark to the abbé; the king might resent the slighting manner in which a mark of royal favour had been received; where would M. de Pontivy find support against the absolute power of a monarch accustomed to see everything bend before him?

"My dear friend," answered the abbé, "in the first place, the king, if what I have heard be correct, will soon have to relinquish his power and to give the Almighty an account of his stewardship. Then," continued he, pointing to a bible which was lying open upon the table, "must I tell you where to look for support in every season of trial? You have seen strange things to-day; you may see stranger still before the dawn of to-morrow's sun."

It was late when M. de la Guette left the Pontivys; he had not been home more than an hour, and was preparing to retire for the night; suddenly a rap was heard at the door, and a few minutes after the servant came in bringing a message from the abbé. The letter ran thus:—

"My dear Friend,

"Whilst you are reading this a messenger is on his way to the palace with three despatches. The first is directed to the chancellor: it contains my resignation as councillor of state; the short time during which I have held this commission—a few hours—has convinced me that, under the present form of government, a statesman must be prepared to sacrifice his principles if he would remain in favour.

"I have likewise declined the post offered to my sister Amélie. The court of Louis xv is not a school for virtue, and we have yet to learn that fashion can divest shame of its proper character.

"Lastly, I write to the archbishop of Paris, my diocesan, acquainting him of my determination to embrace the Protestant faith. I had long, as you know, entertained doubts respecting many points to which in former days I blindly gave my assent; the Lord has been pleased to open my eyes, and I plainly perceive now that his people are bound to separate themselves at once from a system the basis of which is falsehood. My abjuration is no rash thing; it is what I have often thought of doing: but the scenes which I witnessed during the course of this day prevent me from delaying any longer. Amélie is likewise fully determined

to cast in her lot with the Lord's people. Pray for your friend

"HENRY DE PONTIVY."

The important step taken by M. de Pontivy rendered some measures of precaution absolutely necessary, and the early part of the next day was spent by M. de la Guette and himself in considering the course which it would be most advisable to pursue. They were still doubting whether they had better leave Versailles merely for the south of France, or at once endeavour to proceed directly either to Germany or to England, when a detachment of soldiers, headed by a lieutenant, entered the house. The officer forthwith took out of his pocket two papers, gave one to M. de Pontivy, the other to M. de la Guette, and requested them both to consider themselves under arrest, as well as mademoiselle; his orders were that the prisoners should be conveyed immediately to the Bastille.

There was something kind and respectful in the officer's deportment. He expressed how sorry he felt that he had so disagreeable a duty to perform. He understood that M. de Pontivy did not sympathise with the Jesuits; but what occasion was there for manifesting his dislike by joining the Huguenots? Was he aware of the severe laws enacted against them?

"Yes, sir."

"The deprivation of civil and natural rights, confiscation of property, fines, degradation, prison and the hulks, perhaps."

"We are quite prepared," answered M. de Pontivy, "to comply with all the requirements of the law."

"Well then, gentlemen," said the officer, "I must trouble you to follow me directly. My men have brought a sedan chair for mademoiselle; let us be off at once, if you please."

The party started immediately. As they went along the streets, they had almost to elbow their way through a compact crowd of persons, who, as on the day before, were eagerly awaiting fresh intelligence respecting the king's health. Although some more favourable symptoms had manifested themselves during the night, yet the king was still in a very dangerous state. The anxiety of the people could not be said to proceed from affection or sympathy. Louis xv had unceasingly helped to destroy every tie which connected him with his subjects, and in his last moments he was abandoned even by the favourites upon whom he had lavished the riches of France. A mere feeling of curiosity had brought the multitude together. "What shall we have next?" was the question readable on every feature.

As the prisoners approached the palace walls, an unaccountable rumour spread from one end of the crowd to the other; one of the windows was suddenly opened, and a herald appeared on the balcony. "The king is dead!" cried he; then, taking his hat off and waving it in the air, "Long live the king!"

The outburst of applause which followed this announcement was deafening, and amidst the most enthusiastic cheering Louis xvi was proclaimed. The new sovereign could not do better than stamp with an act of mercy the first exercise of his authority; and a royal decree restored to liberty our three friends before they had left Versailles.



### Varieties.

**THE BLIND NATURALIST AND HIS WIFE.**—Study by day, and reading during the night, had so impaired the health and weakened the sight of Francis Huber, that, when he was fifteen years old, the physicians advised entire freedom from all literary occupation. For this purpose he left his native town of Geneva, and went to reside in a village near Paris, where he became a farmer. His rural life soon restored him to health, but with the prospect of approaching blindness. He had, however, sufficiently good eyes to see and become attached to Maria Aimée Lullin. But Mons. Lullin, the father of the girl, regarding the increasing probability of Huber's blindness as a sufficient reason, caused the connexion to be broken off. The more the misfortune, however, became certain, the more Maria determined not to abandon her lover. She made no resistance to the will of her father, but quietly waited until she had attained a lawful age to act for herself. Poor Francis, fearful of losing his precious prize, tried to conceal, even from himself, that an entire deprivation of sight was his inevitable lot. When total darkness did come upon him, his affliction was the more poignant from fear that Maria would desert him. He might, however, have trusted the strength of a woman's love. As soon as Maria was twenty-five years old, she led to the altar the blind object of her youthful affections. The generous girl had loved him in his days of light and youth, and she would not forsake him when a thick veil fell for ever between him and the glories of the external world. Mrs. Huber had no reason to regret the disinterested step she had taken. Her husband's active and brilliant mind overcame the impediments occasioned by the loss of vision. His attention was turned to the history of bees: and by the assistance of his wife, and afterwards of his son, he observed their habits so closely, that he soon became one of the most distinguished naturalists in Europe. During forty years of happy union, Mrs. Huber continued to bestow upon her husband her most unremitting attention: she read to him; she wrote for him; she walked with him; she watched his bees for him: in a word, her eyes and her heart were devoted to his service. After her death, he used to say, "Whilst she lived I was not sensible of the misfortune of being blind."

**VISITORS TO THE BRITISH MUSEUM.**—A parliamentary account of the British Museum up to the 31st ult. has been published. The "Athenæum" observes: "Looking over the return, we find an enormous falling off in the number of visitors during the past year, as compared not only with the Exhibition year, but with 1850 and even with 1847. This will be seen by the following short table:—

Visitors to the General Collection.	
1847 . . . . .	820,965
1848 . . . . .	897,985
1849 . . . . .	979,073
1850 . . . . .	1,098,863
1851 . . . . .	2,527,216
1852 . . . . .	507,973

We can understand that the Museum, like many other places, was to some extent 'used up' by the Londoners and their country-cousins during 1851, and we should have expected some amount of falling off; but how are we to account for such a diminution as that shown by the above figures, except on the assumption that the public, after having gratified their curiosity by gazing at the new building and its contents, have discovered that its arrangements are not of such a nature as to afford them instruction? The Museum has lost its novelty as a show place, and has not yet acquired the character or even the appearance of a place of teaching."

**GOLD TEST.**—The gold-dust buyers of Southampton use an immense magnet as one means of testing the purity of the gold. By plunging this magnet into a heap of gold-dust, the freedom of the latter from metalliferous admixture, or otherwise, is discovered by the quantity and degree of firmness with which the dust adheres to the magnet. It is this test which detects the superior purity of Australian, as compared with Californian, gold.

**SINGULAR DISCOVERY.**—There is nothing new under the sun. The American coffin which attracted so much attention at the Great Exhibition of 1851, and which, by producing the vacuum by means of the air-pump, was thought to be an entirely new method of preserving corpses from decay, has been just proved to have been known in the middle ages. While demolishing, a short time ago, the old church of the ancient Welsh College at Helmsstedt, near Brunswick, a coffin made of lead was found, the lid of which was of glass of immense thickness, and containing the body of a young girl, apparently about twelve years of age, which still preserved every appearance of youth and freshness, although the coffin bore the date 1461. A private letter from a bystander tells us that "the face and figure of the child were perfect as in life, not a single sign of decay being visible throughout the whole person. The cheek preserved its delicate rose tint, and the forehead its snowy whiteness. The hair, which was of a beautiful gold-colour, was parted on the brow, and fell in long ringlets over the bosom, crisp and fresh as though the child had lain down to sleep the moment before. The dress of white satin embroidered in gold flower, the shoes of white velvet, and the lace apron, all seemed bright as if newly purchased; and more astonishing still, the bunch of lilies held in the hand of the corpse still looked as fresh and moist as though the dew still hung upon it. The workmen engaged in the demolition of the building were struck with awe, and immediately went in quest of the chief magistrate of the place, who soon arrived on the spot, accompanied by several of the inhabitants. Unfortunately, the worthy functionary having recently been made the victim of a practical joke in the town, and being half suspicious that the same thing was intended, would not believe in the reality, and seizing a spade from the hand of one of the workmen who stood near, dealt a heavy blow upon the lid of the coffin, and smashed one or two of the diamond-shaped panes of glass of which it was composed. In a moment, and while yet he gazed, a thin cloud of dust or vapour, like a wreath of smoke, rose up from the coffin and dimmed the sight, veiling the corpse from our view. When it had disappeared, we gazed downwards in awe; nothing remained of what had struck us with so much wonder: all had vanished, and left nought behind but a heap of discoloured dust, a few rags of tinsel, and one or two dried bones."

**THE UPS AND DOWNS OF LIFE.**—The other day, says a correspondent of the "Chicago Tribune," having need of help from a drayman, we called an Irishman to our assistance. He performed his duty with great promptness, and his language and demeanour generally were such as to command our admiration. Having paid him for his trouble, the following conversation took place:—"How long have you been in this city?" we inquired. "Twelve months to-morrow, sir," he politely replied. "Pray, what was your occupation in the old country?" For a moment the man coloured, and dropped his head, but in an instant after, raising himself with the dignity of a man, he boldly replied, "I was a physician in Dublin." Somewhat surprised, we asked how it was that he was now driving a dray. His reply in substance was, that he brought his family direct from Dublin to Chicago, but when he arrived here his funds were so much exhausted that he was unable to maintain the appearance of his profession; besides, he found the city full of young physicians waiting till the city grew. Having no mechanical trade, he purchased a horse and dray, and at once began to earn a livelihood for himself and family. We call this a noble man.

**LIVING IN THE EAST.**—The "Literary Gazette," in a notice of Mr. Neale's work on Syria, says:—"People who love to live well and cheap at the same time should go to Antioch. Mr. Neale tried to be extravagant there, but found it almost impossible, 'house-rent, servants, horses, board, washing, and wine included,' to spend more than 40*l.* a year. Oh, that Antioch were London! Fancy 7½*lb.* of good mutton for 1*s.*! fat fowls, for 2*d.* a piece! 70*lb.* of fish for 1*s.*! and all possible fruits and vegetables sufficient for one's household for 2*d.* a week!"